

TRAY ASSEMBLY FOR OPTICAL INSPECTION APPARATUS

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

(001) The present application claims priority from co-pending provisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/475,288, filed June 3, 2003 (Attorney docket number BYRK-27PR), which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

Field of the Disclosure

(002) The present disclosure relates to an apparatus and method for performing tests on a sample of body fluid to be optically inspected and, more particularly, to a liquid sample carrier tray for use with the apparatus. Even more particularly, the present disclosure relates to a tray assembly for alternatively supporting at least two different types of liquid sample carriers for testing within an optical inspection apparatus.

Background of the Disclosure

(003) It is useful for various medical diagnostic purposes to utilize a reflectance spectroscope to analyze samples of body fluid, for example, to determine the color of a person's urine. A conventional spectroscope may determine the color of a urine sample disposed on a white, non-reactive pad by illuminating the pad and taking a number of reflectance readings from the pad, each having a magnitude relating to a different wavelength of visible light. The color of the urine on the pad may then be determined based upon the relative magnitudes of red, green, blue and infrared reflectance signals.

(004) Conventional spectroscopes may be used to perform a number of different urinalysis tests utilizing a reagent strip on which a number of different reagent pads are disposed. Each reagent pad may be provided with a different reagent which causes a color change in response to the presence of a certain type of constituent in urine, such as leukocytes (white blood

cells) or red blood cells. Such a reagent strip may have ten or more different types of reagent pads.

(005) In a conventional spectroscope, the process of inspecting a reagent strip may be performed by dipping the reagent strip in a urine sample, blotting excess urine from the reagent strip, placing the reagent strip at a designated location in the spectrophotometer, and pressing a start button which causes the spectroscope to begin automatic processing and inspection of the reagent strip.

(006) For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,654,803, which is assigned to the assignee of the present disclosure, discloses an apparatus and method for determination of non-hemolyzed levels of occult blood in urine. The is provided with a light bulb for successively illuminating a plurality of different portions of a reagent pad on which a urine sample is disposed, and a detector array for detecting light received from the reagent pad and generating a plurality of reflectance signals in response to light received from a corresponding one of the different portions of the reagent pad. The apparatus is also provided with means for determining whether the magnitude of one of the reflectance signals is substantially different than the magnitude of another of the reflectance signals. Where the body-fluid sample is urine, this capability allows the apparatus to detect the presence of non-hemolyzed levels of occult blood in the urine sample. The light bulb may successively illuminate a plurality of overlapping portions of the reagent pad, and may successively illuminate at least three different portions of the reagent pad which are linearly offset from each other.

(007) U.S. Patent No. 5,945,341, which is also assigned to the assignee of the present disclosure, discloses a system for the optical identification of coding on a diagnostic test strip and an automated method for reading a test strip for the analysis of one or more analyte in a liquid test sample. The method involves the spectrophotometric reading of a test strip which bears at least two marker fields on its surface which are capable of reflecting light at different spectral regions from each other. The reading means of the spectrophotometer is programmed to

discern information concerning the strip, such as what analyte the strip is designed to detect, from the sequences of spectral classifications by spectral reflectancy measurements of the strip's marker fields.

(008) U.S. Patent No. 6,239,445, which is assigned to the assignee of the present disclosure, discloses an optical inspection apparatus for inspecting a liquid sample, such as urine. The apparatus includes a tray that is adapted to be physically coupled to a first liquid sample carrier and a second liquid sample carrier, which are both adapted to hold a liquid sample. The first liquid sample carrier is of a first type, such as a reagent cassette, and the second liquid sample carrier is of a second type, such as a reagent strip, different from the first type. The apparatus has a light source adapted to illuminate one of the liquid samples associated with one of the liquid sample carriers when the liquid sample carrier is coupled to the tray at an inspection location and a detector adapted to receive light from the liquid sample when the liquid sample is being illuminated by the light source.

(009) What is still desired is a new and improved tray assembly including a support tray that is adapted to be physically coupled to at least two different liquid sample carriers such as a reagent cassette and a reagent strip. Preferably, the new and improved tray assembly will be user-friendly and easy to use. In addition, the new and improved tray assembly will preferably be easy to clean and less likely to contaminate the optical inspection apparatus with excess bodily fluids from the liquid sample carriers.

Summary of the Disclosure

(010) The disclosure is directed to exemplary embodiments of a new and improved tray assembly which allows different types of liquid carriers to be utilized in an liquid sample inspection apparatus in a simple and convenient manner. The new and improved tray assembly is user-friendly and easy to use.

(011) One exemplary embodiment of the tray assembly includes a support tray insertable within an inspection location within the liquid sample inspection apparatus so that a light source of the apparatus illuminates a liquid sample carried on the support tray and a detector of the apparatus receives light from the liquid sample when the support tray is positioned at the inspection location, and an insert supported within the support tray and having a first surface adapted to receive a first type of liquid carrier and a second surface adapted to receive a second type of liquid carrier different from the first type of liquid carrier.

(012) According to one aspect of the present disclosure, the first type of liquid carrier comprises a reagent cassette, and the first surface of the insert has a recess shaped to receive a first portion of the reagent cassette. According to another aspect, the second type of liquid carrier comprises a reagent strip having a plurality of reagent pads disposed thereon, and the second surface of the insert has an elongated channel sized to accommodate the reagent strip.

(013) Another exemplary embodiment of the tray assembly of the present disclosure includes a support tray insertable within an inspection location within the liquid sample inspection apparatus. The support tray includes first and second opposing ends, and a top surface extending between the first and second opposing ends and having a compartment. The compartment has an open end at the first end of the support tray and an end wall nearer the second end of the support tray. The assembly also includes an insert movably supported within the compartment of the support tray and movable between a first position adjacent the end wall of the compartment and a second position adjacent the open end of the compartment. When the insert is in the first position the compartment is adapted to receive a first type of liquid carrier adjacent the open end of the compartment. The insert includes a surface adapted to receive a second type of liquid carrier different from the first type of liquid carrier. The assembly is adapted to support the second type of liquid carrier when the insert is in the second position.

(014) Additional aspects and advantages of the present disclosure will become readily apparent to those skilled in this art from the following detailed description, wherein only

exemplary embodiments of the present disclosure are shown and described, simply by way of illustration of the best mode contemplated for carrying out the present disclosure. As will be realized, the present disclosure is capable of other and different embodiments, and its several details are capable of modifications in various obvious respects, all without departing from the disclosure. Accordingly, the drawings and description are to be regarded as illustrative in nature, and not as restrictive.

Brief Description of the Drawings

(015) Reference is made to the attached drawings, wherein elements having the same reference character designations represent like elements throughout, and wherein:

(016) **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of an optical inspection apparatus constructed in accordance with the present disclosure, which may be used to perform various tests of a body fluid sample;

(017) **FIG. 2** is an end perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a tray assembly constructed in accordance with the present disclosure for use with the apparatus of **FIG. 1**, wherein the assembly includes a support tray and an insert, and wherein the insert is shown being positioned in the support tray with a first surface facing upwardly so that a reagent cassette may be held by the insert in the support tray;

(018) **FIG. 3** is an end perspective view of the assembly of **FIG. 2**, wherein the insert is shown being positioned in the support tray with a second surface facing upwardly so that a reagent strip may be held by the insert in the support tray;

(019) **FIG. 4** is an enlarged, opposite end perspective view of a portion of the assembly of **FIG. 2**, wherein the insert is shown being positioned in the support tray with the second surface facing upwardly;

(020) **FIG. 5** is an enlarged, end perspective view of a portion of the support tray of the assembly of **FIG. 2**;

(021) **FIG. 6** is an enlarged, opposite end perspective view of the insert of the assembly of **FIG. 2**, wherein the second surface of the insert is shown facing upwardly;

(022) **FIG. 7** is an end perspective view of another exemplary embodiment of a tray assembly constructed in accordance with the present disclosure for use with the apparatus of **FIG. 1**, wherein the assembly includes a support tray and an insert received for movement within the tray, and wherein the insert is shown in one position so that a reagent strip may be inserted into the insert in the support tray;

(023) **FIG. 8** is an end perspective view of the assembly of **FIG. 7**, wherein the insert is shown in another position allowing a reagent cassette to be inserted into the support tray;

(024) **FIG. 9** is an end perspective view of an additional exemplary embodiment of a tray assembly constructed in accordance with the present disclosure for use with the apparatus of **FIG. 1**, wherein the assembly includes a support tray and an insert received for movement within the tray, and wherein the insert is shown in one position so that a reagent strip may be inserted into the insert in the support tray;

(025) **FIG. 10** is an end perspective view of the assembly of **FIG. 9**, wherein the insert is shown in another position allowing a reagent cassette to be inserted into the support tray;

(026) **FIG. 11** is a perspective view of an optical inspection apparatus constructed in accordance with the prior art, which may be used to perform various tests of a body fluid sample;

(027) **FIG. 12** is a perspective view of a support tray, constructed in accordance with the prior art, of the apparatus of **FIG. 11**, and a reagent cassette that may be inserted into the support tray;

(028) **FIG. 13** is a perspective view of the support tray of the apparatus of **FIG. 11** and a reagent strip holder, constructed in accordance with the prior art, that may be inserted into the support tray; and

(029) **FIG. 14** is a perspective view of a reagent strip, constructed in accordance with the prior art, usable with the reagent strip holder of **FIG. 13**.

Detailed Description of Exemplary Embodiments

(030) **FIGS. 2** through **6** show an exemplary embodiment of a new and improved tray assembly **200** constructed in accordance with the present disclosure for use with the apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1**. The apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** is a reflectance spectroscope, for optically inspecting liquid samples such as body fluid samples, placed on a liquid carrier, such as a reagent cassette **122** or a reagent strip **146**. The tray assembly **200** includes a support tray **202** and an insert **204** that fits into the support tray with one of a first surface **206**, adapted to hold the reagent cassette **122**, and a second surface **208**, adapted to hold the reagent strip **146**, facing upwardly so that one of the reagent cassette **122** and the reagent strip **146** can be held by the insert **204** in the support tray **202**.

(031) Prior to discussing the new and improved tray assembly **200** of **FIGS. 2** through **6**, however, the prior art shown in **FIGS. 11** through **14** will first be discussed to provide background information. **FIG. 11** illustrates an inspection apparatus **10**, such as a reflectance spectroscope, for optically inspecting liquid samples such as body fluid samples. The apparatus **10** includes a support tray, which is also shown in **FIGS. 18** and **19**. The particular apparatus **10** shown in **FIG. 11** is a CLINITEK[®] 50 Urine Chemistry Analyzer available from Bayer Corporation, Diagnostics Division, of Tarrytown, NY. The apparatus **10** is described in greater detail in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,654,803; 5,945,341; and 6,239,445, which are assigned to the assignee of the present disclosure and incorporated herein by reference.

(032) The inspection apparatus 10 has an integral keyboard 12 for user input, and a visual display 16 for displaying various messages to a user relating to the operation of the inspection apparatus 10. The inspection apparatus 10 also has a housing 17 with an opening 18 formed therein into which the support tray 20 may be retracted. As shown in FIGS. 11 and 12, the support tray 20 is adapted to receive a first type of liquid carrier or removable insert, which may be in the form of a reagent cassette 22.

(033) The reagent cassette 22 may be a disposable, single-use cassette for doing a pregnancy test, for example, in a conventional manner. The reagent cassette 22 has an opening or well 24 formed in an upper surface 26 into which a body fluid sample, such as urine, is placed. The interior of the reagent cassette 22 has a reagent strip (not shown) which may react with the body fluid sample placed in the well 24. Depending on the results of the test, the reagent strip may change color (e.g., a colored stripe may appear), which is determinable from viewing the reagent strip through a window 28 formed in the upper surface 26 of the reagent cassette 22.

(034) As shown in FIG. 12, the support tray 20 has a rectangular recess 30 sized so that the reagent cassette 22 may be placed therein. As shown in FIGS. 11 and 12, the reagent cassette 22 is longer than the recess 30 so that when the reagent cassette 22 is placed within the recess 30, a portion of the reagent cassette 22 extends outwardly beyond the end of the support tray 20 in order to enable a user to grasp the outwardly extending end of the reagent cassette 22 and lift it out of the recess 30.

(035) Referring to FIG. 12, an upper surface 32 of the recess 30 has a plurality of upwardly extending locating members 34, which may be in the form of pins, for example. When the reagent cassette 22 is placed within the support tray 20, the locating members 34 are positioned within a plurality of apertures or holes (not shown) formed in the bottom surface of the reagent cassette 22, so that the locating members 34 prevent the reagent cassette 22 from inadvertently sliding out of the recess 30. The support tray 20 may have a conventional

calibration chip **38** of a certain color, such as white, disposed in its upper surface to facilitate calibration in a conventional manner.

(036) Referring to **FIG. 13**, the support tray **20** is also adapted to receive a second type of liquid carrier or removable insert, which may be in the form of a reagent strip holder **40**. The outer dimensions of the reagent strip holder **40** are generally the same as the outer dimensions of the reagent cassette **22** so that the reagent strip holder **40** also fits within the recess **30**. The reagent strip holder **40** has a plurality of apertures or holes (not shown) formed in its bottom surface which are positioned to receive the locating members **34** to prevent the reagent strip holder **40** from inadvertently sliding out of the recess **30**, as described above in connection with the reagent cassette **22**.

(037) As shown in **FIG. 13**, the reagent strip holder **40** is longer than the recess **30** so that when the reagent strip holder **40** is placed within the recess **30**, a portion of the reagent strip holder **40** extends outwardly beyond the end of the support tray **20** in order to enable a user to grasp the outwardly extending end of the reagent strip holder **40** and lift it out of the recess **30**.

(038) The reagent strip holder **40** has a central channel **43** formed therein which is sized to conform to the shape of a reagent strip **46**, an example of which is shown in **FIG. 14**. The reagent strip holder **40** may have a raised lip **44** which is disposed around the periphery of the reagent strip holder **40** to reduce the likelihood of body fluid samples contaminating the support tray **20**.

(039) Referring to **FIG. 14**, the reagent strip **46** may have a thin, non-reactive substrate **48** on which a number of reagent pads **50** are fixed. Each reagent pad **50** may be composed of a relatively absorbent material impregnated with a respective reagent, each reagent and reagent pad **50** being associated with a particular test to be performed. When urinalysis tests are performed, they may include, for example, a test for leukocytes in the urine, a test of the pH of the urine, a test for blood in the urine, etc. When each reagent pad **50** comes into contact with a

urine sample, the pad changes color over a time period, depending on the reagent used and the characteristics of the urine sample. The reagent strip **46** may be, for example, a MULTISTIX[®] reagent strip commercially available from Bayer Corporation, Diagnostics Division, of Tarrytown, NY.

(040) Referring back to **FIG. 11**, during an inspection procedure the support tray **20** is moved between an outwardly extended position as shown in **FIG. 11** and an optical inspection position in which the tray **20** is retracted inwardly into the housing **17** of the inspection apparatus **10**. The inspection apparatus **10** may be used to optically inspect multiple reagent cassettes **22** and multiple reagent strips **46** in any order desired by the user, since the reagent cassettes **22** and the reagent strip holder **40** have the same outer dimensions and fit within the recess **30** in the support tray **20**.

(041) In using the inspection apparatus **10**, the user may prepare a reagent cassette **22** for optical inspection by putting a body fluid sample in the well **24** and then placing the cassette **22** in the recess **30** formed in the support tray **20**. The user may then press start buttons **14** on the keyboard **12** to cause the controller **100** to retract the support tray **20** inwardly so that the window **28** in the reagent cassette **22** is illuminated by the light source **108** and so that one or more reflectance signals are generated by the detection apparatus. After the reflectance signals are generated and processed by the controller, the test results may be displayed on the display **16** and/or printed out by a printer **11**.

(042) In order to then perform one or more optical inspection tests on a reagent strip **46**, the user would remove the reagent cassette **22** from the recess **30** in the support tray, discard the cassette **22**, and place the reagent strip holder **40** in the recess **30** in the support tray **20**.

(043) To prepare a reagent strip **46** for optical inspection, the user would dip the reagent strip **46** into a body fluid sample to be tested so that the reagent pads **50** are immersed in the sample or otherwise apply the sample to the pads **50**. After the side of the reagent strip **46** is

blotted to remove excess fluid, the user places the strip **46** in the central channel **43** of the holder **40** and presses the start key **14** to initiate optical inspection of the reagent strip **46**. The reagent strip holder **40** is then automatically retracted into the housing **17** and may be successively positioned at multiple locations within the inspection apparatus **10** so that each of the reagent pads **50** is optically inspected at an inspection location.

(044) The provision of a support tray **20** which is adapted to be used with different types of liquid carriers allows the user to quickly and conveniently change the liquid carrier while allowing the inspection apparatus to optically inspect different types of liquid-carrying mechanisms. It should be noted that the support tray **20** does not have to be removed from the inspection apparatus **10** in order to replace one type of liquid carrier with another type of liquid carrier.

(045) The tray assembly **200** of the present disclosure as shown in **FIGS. 2** through **6** is an improvement over the tray assembly **20** shown in **FIGS. 11** through **13** and can be used with the inspection apparatus **10** of **FIG. 11** in a similar fashion as the tray assembly **20** of **FIGS. 11** through **13**. The inspection apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** is also an improvement over the inspection apparatus **10** of **FIG. 11**, and is similar in operation to the inspection apparatus **10** of **FIG. 11**. The improved inspection apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** is described in greater detail in co-pending U.S. patent application serial number ____, filed on ____ (Attorney Docket Number BYRK-003), which is incorporated herein by reference. Components of the inspection apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** that are similar to the inspection apparatus **10** of **FIG. 11** have the same reference numeral preceded by a "1". The inspection apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1**, however, includes a touch-screen display **115** in place of the keyboard **12** and the display screen **16** of **FIG. 11**. The inspection apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** also includes a door **119** in the opening **118**, that opens upon the tray assembly **200** being extended out of the opening **118**.

(046) During use, the insert **204** of the tray assembly **200** of the present disclosure is removable from the support tray **202** and can be turned over and re-inserted into the support tray

202 depending upon which of the reagent cassette 122 and the reagent strip 146 is to be used with the tray assembly 200. The reagent cassettes 122 of FIG. 2 is similar to the reagent cassette 22 of FIG. 12 such that similar elements have the same reference numeral precede by a “1”. In addition, the reagent strip 146 of FIG. 3 is similar to the reagent cassette 46 of FIG. 14 such that similar elements have the same reference numeral precede by a “1”. Since the reagent cassette 122 and the reagent strip 146 do not directly touch the support tray 202, but are instead supported by the insert 204, the support tray 202 is less likely to be contaminated by excess bodily fluids from the reagent cassette 122 and the reagent strip 146. Instead, the insert 204 can be removed from the support tray 202 and cleaned of excess bodily fluids if necessary. In addition, the support tray 202 can also be easily cleaned upon removal of the insert 204.

(047) Referring to FIG. 2, the first surface 206 of the insert 204 has a recess 210 shaped to receive a first portion 212 of the reagent cassette 122. An end wall 214 of the recess 210 of the first surface 206 of the insert 204 is curved to match a curved end wall 216 of the first portion 212 of the reagent cassette 122, to ensure that a user correctly orients the reagent cassette 122 within the insert 204. The insert 204 includes bosses 218a, 218b at an open end 220 of the recess 210 that are received in, respectively, indents 222a, 222b in the reagent cassette 122 to prevent the reagent cassette 122 from sliding out of the insert 204. Alternatively, the bosses can be provided on the reagent cassette 122 and the indents in the insert 204. A second portion 224 of the reagent cassette 122 extends outwardly beyond the open end 220 of the recess 210 when the reagent cassette 122 is correctly positioned within the insert 204. The second portion 224 of the reagent cassette 122 is separated from the first portion 212 of the reagent cassette 122 by the indents 222a, 222b of the reagent cassette 122. As is noticeable in FIG. 2, the second portion 224 of the reagent cassette 122 is shorter than the first portion 212 of the reagent cassette 122 to further ensure that a user correctly orients the reagent cassette 122 within the insert 204. In addition, the bosses 218a, 218b of the recess 210 are provided in slightly different sizes or shapes, and the indents 222a, 222b of the reagent cassette 122 are also provided in slightly

different sizes or shapes, which match the bosses **218a**, **218b**, to prevent the reagent cassette **122** from being inserted into the insert **204** upside down.

(048) Referring to **FIG. 3**, the second surface **208** of the insert **204** has an elongated channel **226** sized to accommodate the reagent strip **146**. The second surface **208** of the insert **204** also has an end wall **228** closing the elongated channel **226** at an end of the insert **204**, and a top surface of the end wall **228** is white (or other suitable color) such that the inspection apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** can use the white end wall **228** to determine if the reagent strip **146** is correctly abutting the end wall **228** during an inspection procedure.

(049) As shown in **FIGS. 2** through **4** and **6**, the first and the second surfaces **206**, **208** of the insert **204** face in opposite directions and the insert **204** also includes first and second opposing ends **230**, **232** connecting the first and the second surfaces **206**, **208**, and first and second opposing sides **234**, **236** connecting the first and the second surfaces **206**, **208** and extending between the opposing ends **230**, **232**.

(050) As shown in **FIGS. 2** through **5**, the support tray **202** includes first and second opposing ends **238**, **240**, a top surface **242** extending between the first and second opposing ends **238**, **240** and having a compartment **244** extending from the first end **238** for receiving the insert **204**. The compartment **244** includes an end wall **246** conforming to the second end **232** of the insert **204** and opposing first and second side walls **248**, **250** extending from the end wall **246** and conforming to the first and second opposing sides **234**, **236** of the insert **204**.

(051) The first and the second opposing ends **230**, **232** of the insert **204** have different shapes to ensure that a user will correctly orient the insert **204** within the support tray **202** during use. In the exemplary embodiment of **FIGS. 2** through **4** and **6**, the shape of the first end **230** of the insert **204** is rectangular and the shape of the second end **232** of the insert **204** is curved.

(052) Referring to **FIGS. 2** through **4**, the top surface **242** of the support tray **202** includes an elongated channel **252** extending from the second end **240** of the support tray **202**, and a white calibration strip (not shown) is received in the elongated channel **252** of the support tray **202**. The top surface **242** of the support tray **202** also includes a sloped surface **256** extending from a center of the end wall **246** of the compartment **244**, and the first and the second surfaces **206**, **208** of the insert **204** include valleys or depressions **258** that correspond to the sloped surface **256** of the support tray **202** when the insert **204** is positioned within the compartment **244**. The sloped surface **256** aids in the proper optical machine inspection of the reagent cassette **122** and the reagent strip **146**.

(053) In the exemplary embodiment show in **FIGS. 2** through **5**, the side walls **248**, **250** of the compartment **244** of the support tray **202** include cut-outs **260** for allowing the sides **234**, **236** of the insert **204** to be grasped when the insert **204** is positioned within the compartment **244**. The support tray **202** also includes an elongated guide **262** extending from the compartment **244**, and the first and the second surfaces **206**, **208** of the insert **204**, as shown in **FIGS. 2** through **4** and **6**, include elongated guides **264** that correspond to the elongated guide **262** of the support tray **202** when the insert **204** is positioned within the compartment **244**. The guides comprise grooves **262**, **264** that receive a wheel (not shown) mounted within the apparatus **100** of **FIG. 1** that helps to smoothly guide and extend and retract the tray assembly **200** from the apparatus **100**. The insert **204** also defines sinks **266** in the elongated guides **264** of the first and the second surfaces **206**, **208**, that prevent excess body fluids from flowing from the insert **204** and down the guide **262** of the support tray **202** (and thus into the apparatus **100**). The sinks **266**, therefore, help to prevent contamination of the apparatus **100** by excess bodily fluids contained on the insert **204** or the reagent cassette **122** or reagent strip **146**.

(054) As shown best in **FIGS. 2**, **3** and **5**, the compartment **244** includes stops **268** for engaging the insert **204** when the insert **204** is positioned within the compartment **244**, to prevent the insert **204** from sliding out of the compartment **244**. In the exemplary embodiment shown,

the stops 268 are positioned so that they engage the first end 230 of the insert 204 when the insert 204 is positioned within the compartment 244. The support tray 202 also includes a land 270 extending from the first end 238 and having a lip 272 for catching and containing excess fluid leaking from the insert 204 when the insert 204 is positioned in the compartment 244. The land 270 and the lip 272, therefore, also help to prevent contamination of the apparatus 100 by excess bodily fluids contained on the insert 204 or the reagent cassette 122 or reagent strip 146.

(055) As shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, a notch 274 is provided in the side wall 250 of the support tray 202. The notch 274 is used for detection by another detector of the liquid sample inspection apparatus 100 of FIG. 1 when the support tray 202 is inserted into the apparatus 100.

(056) As shown best in FIG. 4, the support tray 202 further includes a cam surface 276. The cam surface 276 is used to open the door 119 of the liquid sample inspection apparatus 100 of FIG. 1 when the support tray 202 is extended out from the apparatus 100, and causes the door 119 to close when the support tray 202 is retracted into the apparatus 100. Closing the door 119 during the detection phase prevents ambient light from entering into the apparatus 100 and causing an untoward result. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 4, the cam surface 276 extends from the first side wall 248 of the support tray 202.

(057) FIGS. 7 and 8 show another exemplary embodiment of a tray assembly 300 constructed in accordance with the present disclosure for use with the apparatus 100 of FIG. 1. The assembly 300 includes a support tray 302 and an insert 304 received for movement within the tray. In FIG. 7 the insert 304 is shown in one position so that a reagent strip (not shown) may be inserted into the insert 304 and used with the tray assembly 300, while in FIG. 8 the insert 304 is shown in another position allowing a reagent cassette (not shown) to be inserted into the support tray 302. The insert 304 has the elongated channel 326 sized to accommodate the reagent strip, and an end wall 328 closing the channel 326 at an end of the insert 304.

(058) The support tray 302 includes first and second opposing ends 338, 340 and a top surface 342 extending between the first and second opposing ends and having a compartment 344 extending from an open end 345 at the first end 338 of the support tray 302 to an end wall 346 nearer the second end 340 of the support tray 302. The insert 304 is movably supported within the compartment 344 of the support tray 302 and movable between a first position adjacent the end wall 346 of the compartment 344, as shown in FIG. 8, and a second position adjacent the open end 345 of the compartment 344, as shown in FIG. 7. A reagent cassette (not shown) is inserted into the compartment 344 between the open end 345 of the compartment and the insert 304 when the insert 304 is in the first position shown in FIG. 8. An end 305 of the insert 304 is abutted by the reagent cassette.

(059) In the exemplary embodiment of FIGS. 7 and 8, the insert 304 is slidably movable within the compartment 344 of the support tray 302 between the first and the second positions. As shown, side walls 348, 350 of the compartment of the support tray 302 include channels 380 and sides of the insert 304 include rails 382 received in the channels 380 for guiding the sliding movement of the insert 304 within the compartment 344. The insert 304 is not removable from the support tray 302.

(060) A further exemplary embodiment of a tray assembly 400 constructed in accordance with the present disclosure for use with the apparatus 100 of FIG. 1 is shown in FIGS. 9 and 10. The assembly 400 is similar to the assembly 300 of FIGS. 7 and 8, but includes an insert 404 that is pivotally movable within a compartment 444 of a support tray 402 between a first position, shown in FIG. 10, and a second position, shown in FIG. 9. When the insert 404 is in the first position, the tray assembly 400 is adapted for receiving a reagent cassette (not shown) in the compartment 444 of the support tray 402. When the insert 404 is in the second position, the tray assembly 400 is adapted for receiving a reagent strip (not shown) in an elongated channel 426 in a surface of the insert 404.

(061) The insert **404** is pivotally mounted to the support tray **402** by two pins **490** which extend through side walls **448**, **450** of the support tray **402** and through hinges **492** of the insert **404**. The insert **404** is not removable from the support tray **302**. An anchor **494** is fixed to the floor of the compartment **444**, between the hinges **492** of the insert **404**, and provides an end wall **428** for the reagent strip to abut, and an end wall **405** for the reagent cassette to abut.

(062) Numerous further modifications and alternative embodiments of the disclosure will be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of the foregoing description. This description is to be construed as illustrative only, and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the best mode of carrying out the disclosure. The details of the structure and method may be varied substantially without departing from the spirit of the disclosure, and the exclusive use of all modifications which come within the scope of the appended claims is reserved.